

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 30005

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT OVIP CA FR
SUBJ: LEVESQUE VISIT TO FRANCE

REF: (A) OTTAWA 8988; (B) STATE 24465 (NOTAL)
(C) QUEBEC 383; (D) 76 PARIS 36243

1. ELYSEE INTERNATIONAL STAFF SOURCE HAS ASSURED US THAT IT REMAINS GISCARD'S FIRM PERSONAL POLICY NOT TO FOSTER QUEBEC SEPARATISM, ALTHOUGH GOF, OF COURSE, CANNOT BE WHOLLY INDIFFERENT TO IMPORTANT FRANCOPHONE AREAS SUCH AS QUEBEC. IN EFFECT HE FULLY REAFFIRMED THE MAIN LINES OF REF D, IN WHICH WE LAST ADDRESSED OURSELVES TO THIS QUESTION.

2. THIS BALANCED FRENCH APPROACH, SOURCE CONTINUED, WILL ALSO BE THE GUIDING POLICY FOR LEVESQUE'S VISIT; WHICH, AS FAR AS THE ELYSEE IS CONCERNED, WILL BE CORDIAL BUT WILL NOT DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY IN SCOPE OR FORMAT FROM THE RECEPTION RECEIVED BY LEVESQUE'S PREDECESSORS IN FRANCE. INDEED LEVESQUE HIMSELF HAS ASKED FOR NOTHING MORE.

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3. SPEAKING IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, SOURCE THEN EXPLAINED THAT BALANCED PLANS FOR VISIT HAD INDEED BEEN THREATENED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT EDGAR FAURE, WHO, ACTING ON BEHALF OF PRO-QUEBEC ELEMENTS IN THE RPR DESIRING TO DRAMATIZE THE LEVESQUE VISIT, HAS SUGGESTED LEVESQUE APPEAR BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. GISCARD D'ESTAING, HOWEVER, HAS ALREADY

PERSONALLY INTERVENED WITH FAURE TO PERSUADE HIM TO DROP OR OTHERWISE DEFLATE THIS IDEA. WHILE THE PROJECT IS STILL A TECHNICAL POSSIBILITY, ELYSEE SOURCE THOUGHT THAT A SPECTACULAR LEVESQUE APPEARANCE BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY WAS NO LONGER LIKELY.

4. QUAI CANADIAN DESK, WHICH IS NOT PRIVY ABOVE HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGE, CONFIRMS GENERAL LINES OF GOF APPROACH. DESK SAID THAT LEVESQUE WOULD RECEIVE A "WARM" RECEPTION, AS BEFITS A FRANCOPHONE LEADER, BUT THAT IT WOULD NOT, AT LEAST AS FAR AS GOF IS CONCERNED, EXCEED THE FORMAT OF PREVIOUS VISITS OF QUEBEC PRIME MINISTERS. THUS LEVESQUE WOULD HAVE MEETINGS WITH GUIRINGAUD AND BARRE, AND BE RECEIVED AT ELYSEE. DESK TOO STATED THAT NO REPEAT NO INVITATION HAD BEEN EXTENDED SO FAR BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, BUT THAT SOME SORT OF LEVESQUE CALL THERE STLLL COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED.

5. COMMENT: WHILE SOME PARLIAMENTARY GESTURE TOWARD LEVESQUE REMAINS A POSSIBILITY, WE FEEL REASSURED BY THE FACT THAT GOF, AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, IS ALIVE TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PITFALLS INVOLVED. OUR LOW-KEY INQUIRIES MAY ALSO SERVE TO KEEP THE POTENTIAL RISKS OF OVERDOING LEVESQUE'S RECEPTION IN PEOPLES' MINDS.

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6. IN VIEW OF THE DIRECT PERSONAL EMBARRASSMENT GISCARD WOULD FEEL IF INFO CONTAINED IN PARA 3 WERE TO BECOME KNOW, WE REQUEST ESPECIALLY CLOSE PROTECTION OF THIS MESSAGE.
HARTMAN

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